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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 000267

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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [SY](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: OPERATIONS IN MOSUL DOMINATE JANUARY 27 MCNS  
DISCUSSIONS; PRISONS CONDITIONS, AIRPORT SECURITY, AND  
MOSUL DAM ALSO DISCUSSED

REF: A. A) BAGHDAD 00244  
[1](#)B. B) BAGHDAD 00175

Classified By: CDA Patricia Butenis for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

#### Summary

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[1](#)1. (S REL MNF-I) Following brief remarks from MOD on Army escorts for fuel deliveries, Prime Minister Maliki moved the discussion from the scheduled topics to the situation in Ninewa province, especially in Mosul (ref. A). MOD painted a picture of disorganized security forces in Mosul and outlined steps taken and to be taken to confront terrorists there. He emphasized the need for a centralized command to coordinate efforts to re-establish complete control of Mosul and defeat the terrorists in what he called the final battlefield. The MCNS agreed that a Crisis Action Cell (CAC) meeting, led by the PM, should be convened in a few days in Mosul to formulate a coordinated response. (Note: following the meeting, it was agreed that the meeting in Mosul will be this Saturday, February [1](#)2. End Note.) On other topics, the MOJ reported on steps to be taken to improve prison conditions and the National Security Advisor (NSA) outlined issues of airport security at the Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) and Mosul's airport. Regarding threats to the Mosul Dam, the PM reminded the MCNS not to be alarmist. End Summary.

#### Confronting Mosul's Terrorist

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[1](#)2. (S REL MNF-I) Responding to the PM's request, MOD Abdul Qadr presented a short video clip of the destruction in Mosul resulting from last week's bomb attacks. Somewhat animated, he characterized the situation as out of control, with many different forces at work and no proper coordination and deployment of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). He underlined the need for full support to the Ninewa Operations Command commander who would have the authority over all Iraqi security forces in the city. He said the security forces patrol the streets during the day, but at night the streets are controlled by terrorists and insurgent forces. He admitted that the Ninewa Operations Command had improved in the last few days, but called for the replacement of the MOI's Provincial Director of Police and commander of the Iraqi Army's 2nd Division. Maliki noted that the people's lack of confidence in the security forces had to be reversed and that there were areas of Ninewa outside the city of Mosul that also were not secured. Success requires restoring the people's confidence in the ISF, he added. He also suggested the use of anti-terrorism forces and air support.

¶3. (S REL MNF-I) MNF-I Commanding General (CG) David Petraeus concurred with most of MOD's assessment, noting that MNF-I was supporting MOD's initial response. In particular, additional US Special Operation Forces and a mechanized battalion had been deployed to Mosul from Baghdad as part of the immediate response. He underlined the importance of consulting with the Commander of the Ninewa Operational Command, General Riyadh, to determine what additional resources he needed. Responding to the PM, he said that the shift of forces from Baghdad to Mosul must be carefully considered before being undertaken as those of the 2 IA Division had already returned to Mosul. He also agreed with the PM that areas of Ninewa outside of Mosul were not secured, noting supply lines for terrorists through Ninewa must be eliminated.

¶4. (S REL MNF-I) The PM suggested that a CAC meet in Ninewa so that it could get a first-hand assessment and coordinate with local commanders in planning a response to terrorist activity there. The CG concurred. Chief of Armed Forces General Babakir Shawkt noted that the battle in Ninewa would likely be the last battle with Al Qaeda. He said the second Division of the IA was not weak, but had been under extreme pressure. Its commander was not to blame, he added. MOD disagreed, citing again the need for a good commander. CG reminded the group of the importance of sending help now to ISF in Mosul and consulting with Gen. Riyadh to identify his needs.

¶5. (S REL MNF-I) NSA Muwaffaq Rubaie underlined the importance of good intelligence to support operations. He called for a command center to coordinate the intelligence of military and civilian services to unify targeting for the ISF. Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS) agreed

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with the need for an intelligence coordination center. Rubaie also noted the need for increased coordination with the KRG - some areas of responsibility in the north overlap. He bemoaned the absenteeism in MOI forces in Mosul, stating that only 15 percent showed up for work while the rest collected a salary that ended in the hands of the terrorists. The Minister of State for National Security, Shirwan al-Waeli, stressed the need for the local population to rise up against the terrorists. He also suggested that many former police and soldiers could be brought into the ISF or formed into popular groups like in Anbar province to replace those not doing their jobs. The CG noted that creating such forces would take money. PM Maliki said funding was not an issue - funds will be made available. The Minister of Justice (MOJ) agreed with the need to get rid of those policemen not doing their job and to recruit replacements.

¶6. (S REL MNF-I) The Deputy Director of INIS summarized the discussion, stressing the need for coordination of efforts, cutting off supplies at the border, involving tribal and local leaders in the fight against the terrorists, and using the media to gain support and valuable intelligence from the local people. INIS added that a tip line for people to call in to the services should be established.

¶7. (S REL MNF-I) Summing up, the PM designated NSA Rubaie to set the date and time for a CAC to travel to Ninewa to make an assessment and prepare recommendations on next steps.

Syrian Connection

¶8. (S REL MNF-I) Several speakers, including the PM, noted that the terrorists in Mosul and elsewhere in Ninewa had no trouble with re-supply from Syria. They complained that the border with Syria is wide open, referring to it as nothing more than a simple fence that a child could breach. Maliki and others insisted that resolution of the

security situation in Ninewa and Mosul will require Syrian action against foreign terrorists and their lines of communication.

#### Mosul Dam

¶9. (S REL MNF-I) NSA Rubaie listed several reports being prepared on several security issues. Among these were: prevention of riots in Baghdad, coordination of intelligence with the KRG, improved telecommunications in Baghdad, avoidance of the Mosul Dam's collapse, and protection of the Mosul Dam from terrorist attack. The PM advised the MCNS members to avoid becoming alarmist about the Mosul Dam - steps had been taken already to prevent a catastrophic failure. MOD added that ISF was protecting the dam already. Gen. Babakir noted that the bridge over the dam needed refurbishment, but for the time being, heavy vehicles, including MNF-I vehicles, must avoid using the bridge. CG agreed.

#### Prison Conditions

¶10. (C) The MOJ reported to the MCNS on steps his ministry was taking to address failings in the prison system that the Ministry of Human Rights had identified. He noted that many of the prison administrative staff were incompetent, facilities were overcrowded, some prisons were in effect controlled by militias or even terrorists. In response, the prison reform committee had made numerous suggestions. Already terrorists were being separated from other prisoners, new guards were being trained, the administrative structure of prison leadership was being changed to empower qualified specialists to provide oversight. It will not be easy, but efforts at reform are serious. The PM noted the new facilities would also help.

#### Airport and Port Security

¶11. (S REL MNF-I) Rubaie raised the issue of security and airports and seaports, noting that multiple ministries were involved. He proposed postponing discussion until all parties involved could be gathered, noting the absence of the Minister of Transportation (MOT). MSNSA Waeli, in his role as Acting MOT, said that the need for international certification of the airports required the GOI to conform to international standards. PM insisted that regardless of

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the need to meet international standards, one ministry must be responsible for security at airports. Was it MOI he asked? Waeli rejoined that the airport must have its own security authority. Bids had been put out for security at BIAP as well as Mosul. He noted that the Facilities Protective Service (FPS) was corrupt. PM noted FPS was always trouble and mused who could be sued for having started the FPS. Rubaie closed the topic by noting that a review of security at the Mosul airport would be part of the assessment of security in Mosul.

¶12. (S REL MNF-I) Closing the meeting, MNSTC-I presented a brief report on its renovation and refurbishment of the Mosul airport terminal and control tower. It stressed the usefulness of the funds spent on Mosul's airport, which had allowed its first commercial flights since 1993 to take place in December 2007 in support of Hajj pilgrims. The presentation underlined the need for the GOI to get security right at the Mosul airport so that this new infrastructure asset could continue to contribute to economic development.

BUTENIS